

Page Denied

Next 1 Page(s) In Document Denied

ERIC SHAW

munist leadership are appearing. It is unlikely that Enrico Berlinguer would survive the burial of the Historical Compromise.

Others are more practised. A decade and a half ago, after considerable heart-searching, the Christian Democrats invited the Socialists to join the government, inaugurating a decade of Centre-Left government. The net outcome was a divided, weakened and discredited Socialist Party, a few hesitant reforms—and a Christian Democrat Party more securely ensconced in Italian society and politics than ever.

TOWARDS A EUROPE OF THE PARTIES

DAVID MARQUAND

"[S]ome Europeans remain formally committed to fully-fledged federalism within the Community. It is a noble goal but one which for most of us in Britain is unrealistic, and to some mythical. . . . [I]n the main the British outlook is practical. We cannot see in concrete terms how nine nations with very different political, social and cultural traditions—some of them young nations in European terms—can possibly become federated over any time-scale of political activity on which it is realistic to focus." (The Rt. Hon. David Owen, Brussels, 6th February, 1978.)

"I personally am as totally opposed to a federal Europe as he [i.e. Neil Marten, M.P.] and those who think like him are." (The Rt. Hon. William Whitelaw, M.P., House of Commons, 24th November, 1977.)

"I believe that these words 'federal' and 'federalism' are rather unfortunate in speaking of the way in which the Community may develop under the Treaty of Rome, for it is quite clear from the nature of that Treaty that it will not develop into a federation. . . . The intention of the Treaty of Rome, as writ large in the Treaty and declared by those who created it and those who sustain it, is political union in Europe." (The Rt. Hon. Enoch Powell, M.P., House of Commons, 24th November 1977.)

Now that the dust is settling, it is clear that three schools of thought were engaged in the battle over British membership of the European Community, not two. It is also clear that the school which determined the outcome had the most conservative conception of what the Community was for and of what membership of it would entail. At one end of the spectrum were the convinced supporters of European integration—sometimes misleadingly known as "federalists"—who accepted the famous Monnet dictum that it was necessary to "*unir les hommes*" and not merely to "*coaliser les états*", and for whom British membership of a supranational Community was a positive goal. At the other end were the convinced anti-integrationists who agreed that the Community was in the

* The author is now Professor of Contemporary History and Politics at Salford University, having been until recently Chief Adviser in the Secretariat General of the European Commission responsible for the Commission and the European Parliament, and before that a Labour Member of Parliament.

business of transcending the nation state, but who believed, for a variety of reasons, that Britain should not take part in that business. In between were the pragmatists—practitioners or would-be practitioners of traditional *Realpolitik*, for whom the Monnet vision was never more than romantic window-dressing ("a noble goal", in Dr. Owen's phrase), but who gradually became convinced that since a new power *bloc* was growing up on Britain's doorstep, and since Britain was manifestly unable to stop it from growing up, the only safe course was to join it. Integrationists and pragmatists both believed that it was essential for Britain to join the Community; both believed this because they believed that she could no longer safeguard her interests outside. But although many pragmatists were as moved as most integrationists were by the spectacle of an ancient continent ending the feuds which had so often torn it apart in the past, their concept of what the Community was and would become was profoundly different.

The Pragmatic View

For the pragmatists, the real object of the Community was precisely to "coaliser les états". It was, and for the foreseeable future would remain, an association of sovereign states, reaching its decisions by the familiar diplomatic processes of intergovernmental horse-trading. Hopes or fears that it would develop into something more than this were groundless; apart from any other consideration, the social, cultural and political differences between its members went so deep that attempts to create a significantly more supranational Community were bound to fail. The supranational elements in its constitution were of no importance: De Gaulle had cut the Commission down to size, and the European Parliament had never amounted to anything anyway. It was worth joining because Britain would have a better chance of influencing world affairs as one of a group of sovereign states than as a single sovereign state on her own. But the point of joining was to maximise the power of the sovereign British state, not to help create a new kind of political entity, none of whose members would be sovereign states in the traditional sense.

These pragmatic arguments, not the integrationist ones, persuaded successive British Governments that there was no satisfactory alternative to membership, and there can be little doubt that the pragmatic view of the nature and purposes of the Community is still

the prevailing British view. Such an intellectual underpinning for the "compromesso storico" between Labour pro- and anti-Marketiers was outlined in the Prime Minister's famous letter to Ron Hayward last autumn. It has been repeated on frequent occasions by the Foreign Secretary, and it permeated the speeches made by other ministers in the recent Parliamentary debates on direct elections. It has been echoed, almost as frequently and at least as enthusiastically, by official Opposition spokesmen; almost certainly, it will continue to be the view of Her Majesty's Government whatever the result of the next general election. This consensus, moreover, is challenged much more frequently by opponents of integration than by supporters. A few battle-scarred veterans in the European Movement still advocate more transfers of power from the national to the Community level, but their voices are very loud and do not carry very far. Insofar as a debate on Europe is still going on in the United Kingdom, it is one in which the anti-Europeans point in horror to the prospect of a supranational Community, while the pro-Europeans insist, with knowing blandness, that no such prospect exists.

At first sight, the pragmatists seem to have history on their side. No one can pretend that the Community has realised the hopes of the founding fathers. It is not significantly more supranational today that it was ten years ago; arguably it is less so. The pace of integration is slower than it was in the early years, and the rôle of the Commission less important. The Community budget has grown in size and economic impact, but it still accounts for only 0.7 per cent. of total Community GNP. The wild divergence in Community inflation rates which followed the 1973 energy crisis has since abated a little, but Italy's rate of inflation is still more than three times Federal Germany's. The common agricultural policy—still the Community's most important single practical achievement—has almost been wrecked by the monetary fluctuations of the last few years, and is kept afloat only by a system of monetary compensatory amounts, so complex that it baffles comprehension, and so designed that it has the practical effect of giving a handsome export subsidy to the most expensive agricultural produce in Europe. The Community has become a significant force in world affairs, displaying considerable solidarity *vis-à-vis* other countries and gaining considerable tangible benefits for its members by doing so. But in the external fields it operates as an intergovernmental *bloc*, with-

out requiring any sacrifice of sovereignty from the Member States—in short, in the way that the pragmatists always said it should. Progress towards a more integrated Community, of the sort the founding fathers dreamed of, has been slow or non-existent since the early 1970s.

Yet, as the Bremen summit recently underlined, the pragmatic view is both wrong and dangerous. It rests implicitly on the assumption that the Community can stay where it is; that the Member States can continue to enjoy the advantages of belonging to a strong intergovernmental *bloc*, without making new transfers of power to Community institutions. In reality, the one virtual certainty about the Community's future is that it cannot stay where it is. For it faces two great challenges, each of which is more formidable than is generally appreciated in Britain, and each of which will force it to choose between moving forward and moving back.

Two Challenges

The first is the challenge of enlargement to the South. Whatever the position may have been when the Greeks first applied for membership, the political case for admitting the three applicant countries is now overwhelming. To slam the door on them would not only be to undermine democracy in the three countries where it has won its most resounding recent victories, but to endanger Western interests in areas of acute strategic importance. Yet a Community of 12 is bound, other things being equal, to be less cohesive than the Community of nine. The applicant countries are all much poorer than the existing Community. Portugal's *per capita* income is about a third of the Community average, while even Spain's is only a little more than half. (Those of Ireland and Italy, the two poorest existing members, are respectively 47 per cent. and 59 per cent. of the Community average.) All have serious regional problems, and, in the absence of strong countervailing policies, entry is likely to make them more serious. By the same token, enlargement will enormously exacerbate the existing regional disparities in the Community as a whole. The *per capita* income of Hamburg, the Community's richest region, is six times as large as the West of Ireland's. It is 12 times as large as that of the poorest Portuguese region. Moreover, the applicant countries all suffer from high, and to some extent concealed, unemployment and all have large agricultural populations. If they were admitted tomorrow,

the total number of unemployed in the Community would increase by more than a million, and the number of people earning their livings from agriculture would increase by 55 per cent.

All this will place heavy new burdens on institutions which can hardly cope with the burdens they already have to bear. More farmers—and far more poor farmers—will be growing crops which are already in surplus or likely to be in surplus. More unemployed workers will be looking for jobs, and more uncompetitive industries will be looking for assistance. More interests will be clamouring for more exceptions to the system of common rules which lies at the heart of the existing *acquis communautaire*; more politically sensitive corns will have to be more carefully avoided by those who operate it. Though there will be only a little more jam in Community's budget, there will be much more (and much drier) bread to spread it on, and there are likely to be more and fiercer arguments about the way in which it should be doled out. At a different, but still important level, more languages will be spoken in the Council of Ministers and the European Parliament, more documents will be held up by translation, and more national administrations will be fighting for a fair share of senior posts in the Commission. Above all, more Governments will be taking part in an already creaking decision-making process, in which all Governments have to agree to—or at least to acquiesce in—all the decisions that matter.

Coinciding with the challenge of enlargement, moreover, is the challenge which dominated the agenda at Bremen—that of the economic malaise in which the Community has been engulfed for the best part of five years. The inflationary fever that followed the 1973 energy crisis is subsiding, but only at the cost of declining growth and rising unemployment. At the end of 1977, the year-on-year inflation rate for the Community as a whole was less than 9 per cent., compared with more than 11 per cent. at the end of 1976; more significant still, the improvement was most marked in the most inflation-prone countries. But output grew by only about 2 per cent. during 1977, while the unemployment rate went up from 5 per cent. to 5.4 per cent. In the Community as a whole, six and a half million people are now out of work—40 per cent. of them aged less than 25. At the same time, the old engines of economic growth seem to have ground to a halt. One of the main causes of the boom of the 1960s was the rapid growth of intra-Community

trade: in 1977, intra-Community trade grew by only 2 per cent., as against an annual average of 9 per cent. in the previous decade. Meanwhile, demographic forces beyond anyone's control are making the problem more acute. In the next seven years, according to Commission estimates, nine million more young people will enter the Community's labour market than old people will leave it. And in spite of occasional false dawns, there is still no sign of recovery.

This, too, poses a severe—though perhaps less immediately apparent—threat to the Community's cohesion. So far, it is true, the unity of the market has been maintained. In its relations with the outside world, the Community has lurched towards a slightly shamed-faced protectionism, notably in steel and textiles, but in their relations with each other the Member States have stuck to the free-trade principles on which the Community is based. Though this is true now, however, it is unlikely to remain true if unemployment continues indefinitely at its present level. The depth and gravity of the crisis, after all, were not fully appreciated until recently. Official forecasts suggested that growth in 1977 would be twice what it actually was; one reason why there has been so little pressure for protectionism in the Member States may be that the forecasts were believed. But this situation could change quite quickly: already there are signs that the trade unions' patience, to take one crucial example, is wearing thin. And, in the present climate, it would only take one Government to breach the free-trade front for a kind of domino theory of trade restriction to apply throughout the Community. The Community countries are not likely ever again to engage in old-fashioned tariff wars against each other. But protectionism has many faces, and tariffs are only one of them. The range of instruments with which a modern Government can protect home producers against foreign competition is enormously wide, ranging from "temporary" subsidies to firms in difficulties at one end of the spectrum to outright quantitative restrictions at the other end. Widespread resort to any of them would destroy the unity of the market and the procedures by which it is maintained; and these are the foundation on which the whole structure of the Community is based. Abraham Lincoln once said that the United States could not survive "half slave" and "half free." The Community would find it equally hard to survive half-autarchic and half-committed to trade liberalisation. For its political solidarity is a function of its economic cohesion. Without the com-

mon market, the cosy chats between Community Prime Ministers, to which the British attach such importance, would not take place.

Forward or Back

Both these challenges can be met successfully, but they can be met successfully only by making the Community more supranational. In the case of enlargement, this is clear enough. In its famous "*fresco*" on the problems of enlargement, the Commission pointed out, with a kind of wistful optimism, that the applicant countries want to join a strong Community, not a diluted one. So they do, but their wishes are immaterial. Few car buyers wish to be held up in traffic jams, but if too many cars appear on the roads, traffic jams occur just the same. Anyone who has ever sat on any kind of committee can see that it is bound to be more difficult to get 12 countries, with highly divergent interests, to agree than it is to get nine countries, whose interests do not diverge quite so much, to do so. If agreements are not to take even longer to reach than they do now, those taking part in the arguments preceding agreement will have to be more prepared to give way than they are now. This means in practice that the existing Member States, as well as the newcomers, will have to be more willing to subordinate what they see as their own interests to a majority view of the Community interest.

Their willingness to do this will sooner or later have to be enshrined in written form. So far, the conventional wisdom has been that it is not necessary to secure a formal agreement to rely more frequently on majority voting in the Council of Ministers. Since what matters is that there should be more majority voting in practice. But this is, at best, a half-truth. The reason the Community's decision-making machinery works so slowly at present is not so much that many decisions are taken unanimously as that Member Governments can insist on unanimity whenever they want to. The notorious Luxembourg compromise of January 1966, by which De Gaulle stopped the Community from moving towards majority voting, is a kind of Banquo's Ghost at every Community feast, paralysing the guests into immobility. So long as it is in force, the Council will continue to move at the pace of the slowest and the Commission will continue to be inhibited from playing the active, initiatory role assigned to it by the Treaties. After enlargement, however, rapid movement will be essential. The practical,

TOWARDS A EUROPE OF THE PARTIES

logic underlying the Commission's recent initiatives on monetary union and of the decision taken at Bremen to create a zone of monetary stability in Europe. Monetary union would not bring about recovery all by itself. By ending the exchange-rate uncertainties which at present inhibit deflation in the strong and weak economies alike, it would, however, create a framework within which recovery might occur. But monetary union is like marriage, not like chastity. You can be more or less chaste, but you cannot be more or less married. Nor can you have more or less monetary union: either you have it or you do not. The creation of a zone of currency stability, on Bremen lines, would be of enormous value as a staging post to monetary union. But it would be of value only as a staging post, not as a substitute. For the point of the exercise is to eliminate exchange-rate uncertainty; and after the experience of the last ten years no one is going to believe that exchange-rate changes have been ruled out by anything short of a monetary union. And monetary union would, of course, involve a much bigger transfer of power from national to Community authorities than has occurred so far. Control over the money supply and the exchange rate—two of the most highly-prized weapons in the armoury of the modern post-Keynesian state—would have been placed in a Community armoury instead.

Thus, the choice is stark: either much more majority voting in the Council of Ministers, with all that that means for the balance of power between Council and Commission, or the virtual seizing-up of the Community's decision-making machinery; and either the transfer of two critically important instruments of economic policy from national to Community hands, or continued economic stagnation and the slow erosion of the foundations on which the Community is built. Foolish chatter about "federalism" only obscures the real nature of this choice. As Enoch Powell has said, the question is not whether the Community should move towards "federalism" if by "federation" is meant an entity akin to the United States or the Federal Republic, but whether it should become more integrated and more supranational: whether the goal set out in the Treaty of Rome—"an ever-closer union among the peoples of Europe"—is to be pursued more energetically than in the recent past. If the answer is "yes", the aims laid down in the Prime Minister's letter to Ron Hayward will have to be abandoned. If it is "no", then no matter what brave communiques

433

DAVID MARQUAND

economic problems which enlargement will bring will not be solved without bold initiatives and speedy decisions; if they are not solved, there will be even more conflicts of interest in the Community than there are now. Yet the formal abandonment of the Luxembourg compromise would mean a revolutionary transformation of the existing balance of Community power, to the advantage of Community authorities and the detriment of national ones.

The Economic Crisis

The economic crisis points—less obviously, but even more urgently—in the same direction. The Governments of the Community have failed to end the recession not through indifference or incompetence, but because the classical nation state, having dominated the European stage for most of the last three hundred years, has been made obsolete by the growing interdependence of the last thirty. The member countries of the Community live by taking in each other's washing. All depend much more heavily on foreign trade than they used to, and 50 per cent. of their total foreign trade is with each other. Hence the collapse of the so-called "locomotive" theory, which held that if the Germans could be bullied into reflation more than they wanted to, then the rest of the Community would be pulled along behind them. The Germans refused to oblige, for they knew that their level of investment and employment depends as much on the level of demand in the countries which buy their goods as on the level of demand in Germany; and they feared, with good reason, that if they tried to reflate unilaterally the result would merely be more inflation, not more output or more jobs. If unilateral reflation is ruled out for the strong, it is even more obviously ruled out for the weak. Unilateral reflation in a weak economy would lead, via a deteriorating balance of payments and a depreciating currency, to higher inflation and yet more currency depreciation. It would not lead to faster growth or lower unemployment—or not, at any rate, for long. In the early stages of the recession, after all, the British and Italians both tried to prop up employment by deficit financing on traditional Keynesian lines. Both failed, with disastrous results.

This does not mean, however, that the traditional Keynesian instrument can no longer be used at all. It means that, in a continent as interdependent economically as Europe has become, they can be used only at a continental level. This, of course, is the

TOWARDS A EUROPE OF THE PARTIES

DAVID MARQUAND

may issue from no matter what summit meetings, the Community will in practice slide back towards dilution and fragmentation. Yet, without radical changes in its institutional structure, "no" is by far the most probable answer.

The Institutional Imbalance

Central to the whole Monnet system—central to Monnet's view of the world—was the implicit assumption that *politics* could be banished from the process of integration: that since integration was clearly in everyone's interests, there was no need to exert political pressure or to fight political battles in order to achieve it: that, just as France could be modernised by the a-political expertise of the Commissariat Général du Plan, so Europe could be united by an a-political High Authority whose proposals would carry weight, not because of the representative character of their authors, but because of their intrinsic technical merits. At first, this assumption seemed to have been vindicated by events. The Coal and Steel Community was a triumphant success: Euratom and the Economic Community were duly created in its image. The tariff barriers came down and living standards shot up. For a while, even the French Gaullists seemed incapable of swimming with real conviction against such a beneficent tide. In the end, however, the tide turned; and, in the last ten years, we have learned that the Monnet system was based on a false premise after all.

For integration is not in everyone's interests—or not, at any rate, in everyone's perceived interests. By definition, it entails a transfer of power from national political systems—not just from national governments, but from national administrations, national political parties, even nationally-organised interest groups—to a Community system. Those who hold power in a national system may be willing to lose it if they think that its loss is inevitable, or that they will lose more in the long run by hanging on to it than by giving it up. But it is not in their interests to lose it, and they have a strong tendency to search for arguments to show that there is no need for them to do so. The more deeply entrenched the national system concerned, the more stubborn that search is likely to be. In the early years of the Community, the national systems of the two strongest members were both much less entrenched than they are today. When the Rome Treaty was signed, the Federal Republic was only eight years old. Its institutions were still fragile, and it

was desperately anxious for international acceptance and respectability. The French Fourth Republic was manifestly incapable of solving France's internal or external problems, or of providing a satisfactory focus for the loyalties of the French people. Today, none of this is true. The Federal Republic is one of the stablest and most successful regimes in the world. The Fifth Republic can legitimately boast that it has made France more prosperous relative to other countries and more influential politically than she has been for many years. Britain's national system is less well entrenched now than it was in the 1950s. In the 1950s, however, it was so well entrenched that those who ran it were not willing to join the Community at all. It is still well enough entrenched to be the biggest single obstacle to further integration. In Italy and most of the smaller Member countries the inadequacies of the classical European nation state are still obvious; so support for further integration is strong. In the three strongest Member States, there are inadequacies are masked, either by the regime's success, as in Germany and France, or by the incompleteness of its failure, as in Britain.

This is not to endorse the quaint British view that a supra-national Community is ruled out by deep-seated social, cultural and political differences between its peoples. Social, cultural and political differences exist, of course. But there is no evidence that they are any greater now than they were 20 years ago when progress was much faster or, for that matter, that they are any greater than were the differences between the states of what was to become the Kingdom of Italy on the eve of unification, or those of what was to become the German Empire on the eve of the First Prussian war. Indeed, they are probably not as great. A Sicilian peasant, say, would probably feel more at home in Hamburg today than he would have felt 20 years ago or than his great-grandfather would have felt in Turin. In any case, the notion that integration is held up by deep-seated social or cultural differences implies that the Governments would have gone further if only their peoples had let them. To put it at its lowest, this is as implausible as the opposite notion that the peoples of Europe are panting for more integration and are held back only by selfish and short-sighted Governments. Resistance to integration comes from those who hold power in the national systems, not from the constituents for whom they claim to speak. We do not know if their

TOWARDS A EUROPE OF THE PARTIES

As things are at present, moreover, there are also strong arguments of democratic principle against transferring power from the national to the Community level, in the way which has been advocated here. There can be no democracy without accountability. In a democratic system someone must always be in a position to use Harry Truman's motto, "the buck stops here"; decision-makers must be answerable to, and removable by, those in whose name the decisions are made. In the Community system, no one is unambiguously answerable for anything. The buck is never seen to stop: it is hidden from view, in an endless scrimmage of consultation and bargaining. This may not matter much when the Community's competences are as restricted as they are at present. If they were extended sufficiently to overcome the challenges described above, it would matter a great deal. Monetary union, as we have seen, would entail taking two critically important instruments of economic management out of national hands and putting them into Community hands. National Governments would still be able to decide the level and composition of public expenditure and of taxation, but the monetary framework within which these decisions were taken would be laid down at the centre. National institutions would still make their own trade-offs between wage increases and unemployment, but a Member State with a high propensity to wage inflation could no longer devalue its currency against other Community currencies. The decisions taken at Community level would thus be of enormous political importance, and the body taking them would have to be subject to responsible political direction and control. And, as we have seen, none of the existing Community institutions is capable of providing this.

Similar considerations apply to majority voting in the Council of Ministers. This would greatly increase the Commission's power, without making it more accountable to anyone. Control by national parliaments over the activities of the Council of Ministers would be undermined. So long as each Member Government can veto a Council decision if it wants to, there is a sense in which each Member Government is responsible for all Council decisions, and can therefore be held to account for them by its Parliament. If national vetoes disappear this will no longer be true; and a national Parliament will no longer be able to hold its Government to account for what the Council has done. The resulting "democratic deficit" would not be acceptable in a Community committed to democratic

DAVID MARQUAND

constituents agree with them. All we know is that no one has bothered to find out.

All the same, the climate for integration is colder than the founding fathers expected it to be. And the institutional structure they bequeathed to us has turned out to be ill-suited to the cold. For the obstacles to integration are political and not technical: to overcome them, political pressures do have to be exerted and political battles fought. None of the existing Community institutions can do this. Under the Treaties, the Commission has to provide the impetus for integration. If the Commission fails to provide it, no one else can provide it instead. But the Commission of the 1970s is the old, a-political High Authority of the 1950s—writ, if anything, slightly small. It cannot hope to provide enough impetus to overcome the resistance which is bound to come from the national institutions whose power is threatened by integration, since it cannot exert political pressure or engage, with any hope of victory, in political battles with member governments. In the Western world, the source of political authority is popular election. National Governments, responsible to elected Parliaments, possess not only the sword of power, but the sceptre of democratic legitimacy. The Commission possesses neither. It has highly political functions, but no political base. Commissioners behave (and are behaved to) as though they were members of a responsible Government. They hobnob, on more or less equal terms, with national Ministers; they answer questions and reply to debates in the European Parliament, for all the world like Ministers in a national Parliament; and their President is received by Heads of State and takes part in meetings of the European Council alongside national Prime Ministers. But it is all make-believe. Sometimes, some Commissioners have had distinguished political careers, yet in their capacities as Members of the Commission they are peculiarly grand *hauts fonctionnaires*, not politicians. They are elected by no one and represent no one. Their authority is personal, not representative: technical, not political. These handicaps do not, of course, prevent the Commission from playing an indispensable role as an honest broker between Member States and as the manager of existing Community policies. But it was not set up to be an honest broker or a manager. It was set up to be the "motor of integration"; and it has become clear that that role cannot be played successfully by a body which, by its very nature, speaks for no one but itself.

principles. Yet such a deficit would be inevitable unless the gap were somehow to be filled by the European Parliament.

Direct Elections

Thus the Community is caught in an *impasse*. If it does not move forward, it is almost certain to slide back. But it cannot move forward—should not, indeed, be allowed to move forward—so long as the motive force has to come from an unrepresentative technocracy with no popular mandate or popular base, and so long as there is no machinery to make the Community's decision-makers accountable at Community level to the elected representatives of the people. It follows that the Commission is caught in an *impasse* too. For if the Commission is to provide the motive force which the Community needs it will somehow have to acquire the democratic legitimacy which it has lacked hitherto. It can do this only if it is prepared to give up some of its most cherished prerogatives and change some of its most deeply-held attitudes.

This is the real significance of the approaching elections to the European Parliament. Though they will almost certainly be fought, in practice, on national rather than on Community issues, they will bring party politics into the Community system in a way that has not happened before. Though the directly-elected Parliament will have no more formal power than the present one, it will have much more weight. The directly-elected Members will almost certainly be more active and aggressive than all but a handful of the present ones. They will want to justify their existences to their constituents, if they have identifiable constituents, and in any case to their parties. They will also want to justify their existences to themselves. They will be reaching out for new ways to influence decisions and (even more strenuously, perhaps) for new ways to show that they have influence. They will be more likely to use their existing powers to the full than their nominated predecessors have been, and they will be able to fight for more power with a bigger chance of success. Above all, the mere fact of their existence will break the national Governments' monopoly of democratic legitimacy, and mean that, for the first time in the Community's history, an institution responsible for promoting the general welfare of the Community as a whole will have as much right to speak in the name of the sovereign people as have the representatives of Member Governments sitting in the Council of Ministers.

The directly-elected Parliament may be more parochial and in some senses more nationalistic than the present one. It not only may, but almost certainly will, behave more aggressively to the Commission. But it would be wrong to make too much of this. The Commission is not the Community. Clashes between Parliament and Commission need do the Community no harm; they might even do it good. And even if the directly-elected Parliament is more nationalistic than the present one, there is no reason why it should be less European. As the old French saying puts it, there is more common between two Deputies, one of whom is a Communist, than between two Communists, one of whom is a Deputy. Parliament are even better at indoctrinating their members with the norms of the institution than are public schools or miners' lodges. The norms of the European Parliament are, and will remain, European norms: members who pursue exclusively national interests and refuse to make compromises with their colleagues from other countries will not get very far. No doubt, they will display more sensitivity to the European interests of their voters than their nominated predecessors have done. But there need be nothing anti-European in that. American Congressmen have never been slow to promote the interests of their constituents, and in promoting them have helped to knit the Union together. One of the reasons why progress towards supranationalism has been so slow is that interests are still largely articulated at national level. A rough and demanding Parliament, which showed by its actions that the interests of the ordinary voter have European dimension which can best be looked after at a European level, would do much more to increase the rate of progress than would a Parliament of genteel yes-men, who were so anxious to prove that they were "good Europeans" that they forgot the electors who had sent them there. The Parliament of a living Community should represent the living political forces in the Member States in a Community framework. The new Parliament will undoubtedly be in a better position to do this than the old.

If the Community is to escape from the *impasse*, however, it is not enough that Parliament should have more weight than before. Its new weight will have to be brought to bear in support of integration and against the resistance of the national institutions whose positions are threatened by it. Direct elections, in themselves, offer no guarantee that this will happen. At the moment, as we have seen, only the Commission has the right to put proposals to the Council of

Ministers: Parliament's role is merely consultative. But, although direct elections will add greatly to Parliament's legitimacy, they will add nothing to the Commission's. If direct elections are to make any difference to the process of integration, therefore, one of two things will have to happen. Either Parliament will have to take over the Commission's role as "the motor of integration", leaving the Commission to wither on the vine as a glorified adjunct to the Secretariat of the Council of Ministers. Or some new arrangement will have to be made by which Parliament's new legitimacy and weight can be harnessed to Commission initiatives.

The second alternative is clearly more attractive than the first. Parliaments are good at reacting, but they do not find it easy to initiate. They can scrutinise and control the activities of an executive, but they are too diffuse, too heterogeneous and too fissionary to assume the functions of an executive and make policy themselves. If the European Parliament is to take over the Commission's role in the integration process it will have to throw up an executive body of some kind from within its own ranks—to put it at its lowest, a difficult and time-consuming process. It will also have to engage in a long series of messy jurisdictional disputes, which will do great damage to the Community. For all these reasons, it would be much better for the Commission to remain as the Community's policy-initiating and executive body, with Parliament supplying the legitimacy which the Commission lacks.

Beyond the Treaty

In that case, however, the existing relationship between the two institutions will have to be transformed. The model set out in the Treaty—if "model" is not too pompous a word—is a strange hedge-podge. The Commission can be dismissed by a parliamentary vote of censure; it is obliged to answer oral and written parliamentary questions; and it has the right to attend and participate in parliamentary debates. But these traces of the European concept of parliamentary government co-exist uneasily with bigger traces of the American doctrine of the separation of powers. The Commission and Parliament are separately appointed. Though Parliament can dismiss the Commission as a body, it has no say in its composition and, in any case, cannot dismiss individual Commissioners. Though Commissioners can take part in parliamentary debates, they cannot be members of the Parliament, and will not be able to be, even after

direct elections. But the "American" elements in this mixture are not only more prominent than the "European" ones; they are also less valuable for the future. For although the executive branch of the American Government has as much authority as Governments have in the parliamentary systems of Western Europe and the British Commonwealth, its authority comes from the fact that the President is directly elected by the American people. The Community equivalent would presumably be the direct election of the President of the Commission—a prospect from which even the most "communitaire" member Government would flinch. To try to build on the "American" elements in the Treaty would therefore be building on sand. If the Commission is to acquire new authority and weight after direct elections, it will have to look for inspiration to the parliamentary systems of Western Europe instead. Three features of the parliamentary model are of particular importance in this context. In the first place, the Government is responsible to Parliament, and derives its authority from the fact that it needs the confidence of Parliament. Secondly, its legislation has to be passed by Parliament. Thirdly, the members of the Government and a majority of the members of the Parliament belong, by definition, to the same party or group of parties, and are held together by common political loyalties. Community equivalents could be devised for all of these. But they would entail profound changes of doctrine and behaviour on the Commission's part.

The Commission cannot be made fully responsible to the European Parliament without amending the Treaty; and, given current French and British attitudes, it must be assumed that amendments to the Treaty are unlikely. But there is nothing to stop the Commission from proposing Treaty amendments, or from consulting Parliament about its proposals. Even without Treaty amendment, moreover, it could take some steps along the road to full responsibility. It could, for example, voluntarily submit itself to a vote of confidence immediately after the directly-elected Parliament assembled. It could agree to treat a vote of no confidence, passed by a simple majority of the Parliament, as equivalent to a vote of censure necessitating its resignation, even if the motion did not get the two-thirds majority stipulated by the Treaty. It could decide that an individual Commissioner who lost Parliament's confidence should resign, even if the Commission as a whole retained it. In the legislative field, it could do a great deal more. At present, Parliament is consulted about Com-

TOWARDS A EUROPE OF THE PARTIES

"L'Europe des Partis"

This would bring great changes and need nerve. Hitherto the European Parliament has seen itself less as a cockpit, in which rival political parties fight for power, than as a non-partisan pressure group for the European ideal. Most of its influential and long-serving members have been self-selected "good Europeans". They have been reluctant to bring party conflicts into the chamber and have been only too happy to see themselves as the junior allies of a non-partisan Commission. As a result, Parliament's debates have been conducted in an atmosphere of somnolent goodwill, more reminiscent of a Church Assembly than of a national Parliament. But direct elections will change all this. The members of the directly-elected Parliament will have had to fight an election campaign in order to get there, and will have to fight another campaign in order to stay there; their parties will have had to formulate different conceptions of Europe and to mobilise public opinion behind their differing conceptions. All this is bound to make the Parliament more partisan than it has been in the past. If Commissioners are to survive in the parliamentary arena after direct elections, they will have to do so as party politicians, not as servants of a Europe conceived of as being above politics. They will have to campaign for their parties during the election and to align themselves clearly and unmistakably with their party groups after the elections are over. They will have to abandon the fiction that the Commission is a united "college", all of whose members agree with each other on the issues facing the Community, and see it instead as a coalition of rival political forces whose members work together for certain limited purposes but disagree openly and publicly on fundamentals.

This will entail a difficult, and almost certainly unwelcome, change of perspective—not only on the part of the Commissioners themselves, but also (and more importantly) on the part of the bureaucracy they head. For the Commission is still living in Monnet's shadow. It sees itself as a political body, certainly, but not as a party-political body. If it is partisan, it likes to think, it is partisan only for Europe: party, it feels instinctively, is at best irrelevant to the construction of Europe and at worst positively detrimental to it. Yet if the Commission refuses to change its perspective, it is hard to see much future for it. For the most important feature of the "parliamentary model" is, of course, the third—the existence of a clear party-political link between the members of the Government

DAVID MARQUAND

tion proposals only after they have been sent to the Council of Ministers. Partly because the Commission services usually have good relations with the parliamentary committees in their fields, most mission proposals are in fact acceptable to Parliament, even though they have not been submitted to it before being made. If there is any disagreement, moreover, the Commission usually modifies its proposal to bring it into line with Parliament's opinion. The remains that Parliament is consulted only after the event, and the Commission is free to accept or reject Parliament's views as it thinks fit. Here, too, a change in the legal position would require a treaty amendment, but here, too, the Commission could make important changes in practice on its own initiative. If it decided to reject no important proposal to the Council unless the substance of that proposal had first been submitted to, and approved by, Parliament, it would transform the relationship between the two institutions, and the realities of Community law-making, without affecting a letter of the Treaty in any way. In doing so, it would both give Parliament much more power and ensure that its own proposals had much more weight.

These changes would greatly increase the Commission's authority. The short run at any rate, however, they would also reduce its parent power and freedom of action. Busy Commissioners and parliamentary officials would have to pay more attention to parliamentary opinion than they do now, without having to pay less to opinions of national Governments and national administrations. Mission proposals would have a new hurdle to jump over, without ceasing to have to jump over the existing ones. The Commission could deliberately have flouted the spirit of the Treaty, of which it is supposed to be the guardian; and it would gratuitously have rendered its monopoly of the right of initiative, which is the radical basis of its existing powers. At a deeper level, it would have had to make a fundamental change in its view of Parliament, and itself. Commission and Parliament are, of course, allies already. But in the Commission's eyes at any rate, it is very much the senior ally, and Parliament very much the junior. The changes advocated would turn the alliance into one of equals. Indeed, in an important sense, it would no longer be an alliance at all. The Commission would have to stop seeing the Parliament as a separate institution with which it had relations. Instead it would have to see it as the arena in which Commissioners have to move and survive.

DAVID MARQUAND

and a majority of the members of the Parliament. It is true that, in all the Member States of the Community, existing party divisions reflect the issues of the past rather than the issues of the present and future. The three great political families of Western Europe—Socialists, Christians and Liberals—all base their claims to power on ideologies which were originally formulated in response to the industrial revolution of the nineteenth century, and which have little obvious relevance to the needs and aspirations of the last quarter of the twentieth. The same is true, though in a rather different sense, of such unclassifiable mavericks as the British Conservatives and the French Gaullists. But, with all their faults, the parties are indispensable to democratic parliamentary government, since it is they and they alone which provide the mechanism by which decision-makers can be held to account before the people for decisions taken in the people's name. An essential prerequisite of a Community parliamentary system is, in short, a Community party system. And if the Commission is to be the executive body in the Community parliamentary system, its members will have to be meshed into that party system as well.

No Community party system yet exists. There are six party groups in the European Parliament. The Communists and the Conservatives embrace only two nationalities apiece. The Gaullists (officially, the "European Progressive Democrats") embrace only three. The three genuinely transnational groups—the Socialists, the Christian Democrats and the Liberals—all contain wide divergences of attitude and outlook, and these divergences are not likely to be any less great after direct elections than before. On many issues, the division of opinion follows national rather than party lines. On some, it cuts across both. But although this is true, it is not the whole truth. There are big differences between the German, British and French socialist parties, not least on the institutional questions under discussion here. But no one is likely to confuse Helmut Schmidt or Willy Brandt with Margaret Thatcher or Giscard d'Estaing. Despite their differences, the Socialist parties of the Community all belong unmistakably to the same family. The differences between the non-Socialist parties are greater, but even they all have in common the fact that they are, at any rate, non-Socialist. No doubt, it is a fragile basis on which to build a Community party system, but it would be difficult to show that the ideological basis of the nineteenth-century American party system was any firmer. By the standards of a well-

established national party in a Community Member State, the transnational party alliances which are now getting ready to fight the European elections look distinctly ramshackle and ill-coordinated. But those standards are hardly relevant. By the much more appropriate standards of the American Whigs and Democrats in the 1840s or 1850s, they are surprisingly coherent.

The Community's chances of moving beyond the narrow limits of the present "*Europe des patries*" depend crucially on the emergence of a new kind of "*Europe des partis*", in which the political forces that matter at the national level are bound together by the need to fight for power at the Community level. At present, such a Europe exists only in embryo, but no one who has watched the preparations now being made for direct elections can doubt that they will help considerably to hasten the moment of its birth. And in a "*Europe des partis*", the bicephalous Commission we know today—one head political, but the other technocratic—will have no place. If it wishes to retain its political functions it will have to acquire a political base, and accept that it can do so only through party. If it wishes to remain above party it will have to abandon its political functions to Parliament. From the point of view of the Community it does not matter very much which choice it makes. What matters is that the "*Europe des partis*" should come into existence. For it is only if it does that we shall ever achieve a "*Europe des peuples*".